



# *CIC Social Policy Records*

Quarterly Report

*April to June 2003*





## ***Social Policy Records***

### ***Quarterly Report April to June 2003***

#### ***Introduction***

This quarterly report contains a review of the social policy records compiled by Citizens Information Centres around the country during the second quarter of 2003. The data provided by CICs allows Comhairle to examine the nature of the problems and queries that bring the majority of clients to CICs. Where possible the data is translated into policy relevant findings, which are then used to inform the policymaking process.

Through the social policy records CICs identify a significant number of cases where it is considered that the standard of civil and public services available to clients as well as information available about these services falls short of what is needed or appropriate in the circumstances. The topics discussed below, under various headings, broadly represent the issues consistently arising in the social policy records. It should be noted that any views and /or recommendations contained in this report are those of the CIC concerned and have not been subjected to any broader policy analysis.

#### ***Benefit Applications and Inadequate Provision of Information***

##### ***Bereavement Grant***

A client telephoned a CIC on the 03/04/03 to make a complaint about her local Social Welfare Office. The client whose mother had recently died made enquiries to the Office about the Bereavement Grant. The client's mother had been in receipt of a Blind Pension prior to her death. The client was informed that she had no entitlement to a Bereavement Grant following her mother's death. The client also contacted the Health Board on this issue. Both the

Health Board and Social Welfare Office incorrectly informed the client that she had no entitlement to a Bereavement Grant. Eventually the client's entitlement was recognised and acknowledged by a Social Welfare official but only after numerous telephone calls were made. This information was then confirmed at the CIC office.

### *Literacy as a Barrier to Accessing Benefits*

An information provider at a CIC documented a case concerning a client who was hindered in her efforts to make an application for a pension due to literacy problems. Fortunately a friend of the clients took an interest in her situation and helped her to apply. Upon processing the application it emerged that the client was entitled to a back payment amounting to approximately €7,500 stretching over 3.5 years. If her friend had not been willing to advocate on the client's behalf, she may never have applied for the pension (29/05/03).

### *Disability Benefit*

A client in receipt of Disability Benefit for one year was subsequently notified that she did not have a sufficient number of stamps to continue as a recipient of this particular payment. The client claimed she was not offered guidance or assistance from her local Social Welfare Office either during her initial application for payments or in the process of accessing alternative SW payments (29/05/03).

### *Retention of Benefits*

A client receiving Deserted Wife's Benefit since 1994 was offered a position on a Social Economy Programme for a salary of €247 per week. The woman called to a CIC on the 01/04/03. She wanted to know how this increase in income might affect her Deserted Wife's Payment. The Information Officer at the CIC consulted the Comhairle Citizens Information Database (CIDB) and contacted the local Social Welfare Office for any additional information they might have on this payment. The CIC worker spoke to an Information Officer in the local Social Welfare office who explained that the client would be subjected to a means test identical to that used to assess One Parent Family

applicants. Under this arrangement the client would be permitted to earn up to €146.50 per week without affecting her Deserted Wife's payment. Anything greater than this amount would result in a reduction of her payment in accordance with a sliding scale.

The CIC information provider believed this information to be inaccurate and decided to contact the Social Welfare office in Dublin. The information Officer sought clarification because the information on the CIDB was not consistent with that provided by the local Social Welfare official. The Database stated that with claims made on or after 31 August 1992, the earnings limit for Deserted Wife's Benefit is currently €12,697.38 per annum (gross earnings). If earnings exceed €12,697.38 per annum, a woman may be entitled to a reduced Deserted Wife's Benefit. This is a higher earnings limit than applies to the One Parent Family Payment. The client's claim was made in 1994, which meant that she could have earnings of €12,697.38 a year without jeopardizing her payment. Therefore earnings of €244 per week would **not** affect her entitlement to Deserted Wife's payment in any way. The official in the Deserted Wife's Section of the Social Welfare Department confirmed that the client could accumulate earnings up to €12,697.38 per year without affecting her payment.

The CIC information provider was eager to point out the difficulties, which might have been encountered due to conflicting information. If the client had accepted without question the information she received from her local Social Welfare office she would have been under the misapprehension that she could only earn €146.50 per week without jeopardizing her payment. In fact the client was entitled to earn an extra €97.50 per week. It is fair to assume that if the lady had accepted the information she received from her local Social Welfare office she may have felt disinclined to take up employment for fear of losing her Deserted Wife's benefit.

### *Disability Benefit and Rehabilitative Work*

On the 09/05/03 a client in receipt of half rate Disability Benefit and a full rate One Parent Family Payment had been offered a place on a Community

Employment Scheme. When she sought information from a FAS office she alleges they assured her she would have to forfeit the Disability Benefit and sign on the Live Register before she would be entitled to take her place on the CE Scheme. The CIC information provider involved in the case noted that the information provided by FAS contradicted the information documented on the CIDB and the information provided by the Disability Section of the DSFA. Both sources state that the client would be able to retain her Disability Benefit provided the amount of time worked did not exceed 20 hours per week (rehabilitative work). The client would also retain her entitlement to a One Parent Family Payment once the salary earned from the CE Scheme did not exceed €146.50 per week. The information provider noted that the conflicting information only served to confuse and alarm the woman to such an extent that the CIC worker doubted she would take up employment.

### *Back to Work Allowance*

A further case of inadequate information provision came to light when a single parent telephoned a CIC before beginning a part time job (20 hours per week). For five years prior to this the lady had been receiving an OFP. The client contacted the relevant Departments to inform them of the change in her circumstances as well as to provide details on the amount she would earn and on what date she would be starting work.

The client claimed that eligibility for the Back to Work Allowance was not brought to her attention nor was she told of her entitlement to continue to claim a half rate One Parent Family Payment for the 52 weeks following commencement of employment.

### *Disability Allowance*

On 01/05/03 a disabled client, in receipt of Disability Allowance, called to a CIC to enquire about the possibility of being permitted to carry out some part-time work. The woman wanted to know how any extra income from employment might affect her Disability Allowance payment.

While discussing her options the CIC information provider discovered that the client had not told the Department about a major change in her circumstances. The client had married seven months previously and was genuinely surprised to learn that this life event should have been reported immediately to the Department who would then have taken her spouse's income into account in assessing her entitlement to a Disability Allowance payment. The CIC worker estimated that the client had been overpaid by approximately €2,250.

On examining her employment history further the information officer discovered that when the client initially applied for Disability Allowance, she had more than a sufficient number of PRSI contributions to qualify for Invalidity Pension. If, at that time, she had been awarded this non means-tested payment, her present difficulties would not have arisen. The CIC worker felt that a cursory check by a Social Welfare official would have been sufficient to determine the client eligibility for Invalidity Pension.

The CIC worker involved pointed out that this case illustrates the '*narrow focus*' in terms of customer support adopted by Social Welfare employees. "*While they will answer a query put to them or process an application, they often fail to advise on other vital entitlements or matters related to a particular claim*".

### *Change of Address / Household Benefits Package*

A client who changed address was required to reapply for the Household Benefits Package. Three months after his re-application he had received no acknowledgement. On contacting the Household Benefits Section he was instructed to send in a duplicate form, as they could not find any record of the original request. Four weeks later, the client was notified that the original application had in fact been received, but that processing the application would take up to a further six weeks. The information provider suggested that a separate administrative system for '*Claims Maintenance*' be introduced to deal with minor claim amendments and prevent these from getting caught

up in the bulk of first-time applications received. The CIC worker felt that provision should be made for such amendments to be faxed or emailed.

Another suggestion to improve the application process for the Household Benefits Package was made by a CIC information provider on the 16/05/03 instigated by a case involving a couple on a pension whose re-application for the Housing Benefits Package was causing them considerable distress and hardship. The CIC worker argued that if a letter were made available from the local CWO stating that an individual or couple was still entitled to the Household Benefits Package there would not be a need to re-apply.

### *Medical Card*

Another social policy return made reference to the inadequacies of the application procedure for the medical card and the resulting difficulties experienced by CIC clients. One CIC information provider suggested that the medical card application form was insufficiently comprehensive to facilitate all the information needed by the Health Board to assess an applicant's eligibility. The information worker was referring to a particular client who, having provided the Health Board with every item of information requested on the form was then asked to furnish further documentation (10/04/03).

## ***Eligibility for Benefits***

### *Class S Insurance Contributions*

A CIC information provider noted a potential gap in coverage for those individuals paying Class S Insurance contributions since it came into force in 1988. A man who made enquiries to the CIC as he was approaching age 65 had recently discovered that he was not covered for Retirement Pension in the intervening year between his 65<sup>th</sup> and 66th birthdays. At the age of 66, his Class S Insurance will pay out a full contributory pension, however the information provider asked, "*What does he live on for the intervening year, as he will be forced to retire from work?*" (29/04/03).

### *Fuel Allowance*

A client on Invalidity Pension who had been awarded the Household Benefits Package was subsequently refused the Fuel Allowance. The reason given for this refusal related to the fact that he was a tenant paying rent in shared accommodation. In the case of the Fuel Allowance the Department guidelines call for household income to be assessed and in this instance those guidelines were adhered to regardless of the fact that no relationship existed between these tenants, neither did they share their income. The information provider offered the opinion that it “*seems very unfair that someone who would normally be entitled to this payment is disqualified on the basis of his/her accommodation status*” (06/05/03)

## **Housing**

### *Disabled Person's Housing Grant*

Several social policy case studies arising from the second quarter of 2003 have been documented in the joint Comhairle and National Disability Authority *Submission to the DEHLG Review of the Disabled Persons Grant (August 2003)*. Please see attached for details.

### *Essential Repairs Grant / Special Housing Aid*

A 72-year-old owner occupier approached a CIC on 29/04/03 regarding her central heating system which required repairs. Her only income was a Widow's Contributory Pension. The client had a central heating system installed in 1992. However, the company responsible for servicing her system advised that it now needed to be replaced and consequently they would not service the outdated system any longer. The woman was quoted a price of €3,200 to replace the central heating system.

The information provider involved in the case contacted the Grant Section of the City Council and was informed that as of February 2003 the Essential Repairs Grant would not extend to work carried out on central heating. All applications for central heating repairs made prior to February 2003 would be considered. The information provider felt that this amendment to the Essential

Repairs Grant scheme should to be revised “*as older people living alone run the risk of experiencing hypothermia during the winter months*”.

A 61-year-old client of a CIC was claiming Invalidity Pension as his only source of income. The man wished to apply for the Essential Repairs Grant as the windows in his house were in very poor condition. He was informed by his local County Council that windows do not qualify as an 'essential repair'. The man cannot apply for the Health Board funded 'Special Housing Aid for the Elderly' as only those aged over 66 are deemed eligible.

### *Private Rented Sector*

This quarter saw the return of a number of social policy records in which complaints were leveled at Local Authority inaction in relation to non-compliance with minimum standard regulations in the Private Rented Sector. A query was logged on the 12/05/03 by a number of clients whose landlord was refusing to supply a Rent Book or a written lease. The information provider believed the landlord knew he was breaking the law but his attitude appeared to be 'take it or leave it' since the shortage of accommodation ensured a plentiful supply of potential tenants. Neither was the landlord registered despite the existing legal obligation to register rented property. Similarly on the 01/05/03 a CIC client renting a property complained of his landlords refusal to maintain minimum standards within the property.

On each of these occasions the information officers involved in the complaints expressed dissatisfaction with the policy and practice of the Local Authorities concerned. In the first instance the CIC worker accused the Local Authority of “*turning a blind eye to the tenants' complaints. The law is stacked in favour of the landlord. There is no justice for tenants*”.” In the latter case a Housing Officer of the local authority was approached for help but wrongly informed the information provider that the local authority had no function in the private sector.

### *Rent Allowance*

A caller to a CIC office on 01/04/03 became very distressed about his current situation. Through part time casual work the client earned €30.00 per week. He also received €50.70 in Rent Allowance and €95.80 in a reduced Unemployment Assistance payment. From a total of €176.50 per week the man had to pay €127.00 in rent. The residual €49.50 was all that remained to buy food and pay bills. As a separated father of three the client was also expected to make some efforts to pay bills, which his ex wife had incurred. The man found this impossible to do.

When asked if he could find cheaper accommodation the client stated that in order to maintain access to his children he needed to be able to bring them somewhere suitable. The client highlighted a number of contentious issues, which were negatively affecting his particular situation. He felt that the cap on the Rent Supplement was causing great hardship and suggested that special consideration be given to separated parents, as the allowance for a single person was insufficient to their need for larger accommodation to facilitate children on access visits. The client felt that the option to increase his workload in order to earn more and therefore improve his situation was also problematic. The client maintained that if he were to earn more he would lose benefits thus rendering his efforts counterproductive.

Another CIC information provider submitted a social policy record following a large number of queries made by clients in relation to the Rent Supplement. Each of the clients expressed concern and annoyance with the introduction of the cap on this payment. They conveyed their disbelief at what they described as an irrational system of entitlement. The information provider commented that in reality it is nearly impossible to access adequate, reasonable rental accommodation for €77 per week (as is the case for single persons renting within the North Western Health Board region). *“People feel that if they are struggling to pay higher rent then surely they should be getting some kind of assistance”* (30/05/03).

A similar social policy record was returned on the 22/05/03. Once again a client of a CIC found it very difficult to find accommodation in his area within

the set rent cap. The information provider involved in the case recognised that many clients collude with landlords to understate the amount of rent recorded on the Rent Supplement application form while paying the difference '*under the table*'. The CIC worker concluded that the capping levels needed to be raised urgently as they are not a realistic reflection of the current rental market. The information provider noted that the cap on the Rent Supplement does not appear to be achieving its stated aim of holding down rent levels.

### *Homelessness*

A male client released from prison could not access accommodation or financial means to support himself. The client was given a letter by his Probation Officer to take to his local Social Welfare Office but subsequently lost the letter. The information provider asked the client to provide a Birth Certificate in order to apply for a Social Welfare payment. At this point the CIC worker realised the client was only 17 years old and therefore ineligible for Social Welfare. The information provider spent over 1.5 hours on the telephone making numerous calls to various agencies in an effort to contact a Social Worker and find a place for the client to stay. The information provider was incensed that none of the agencies contacted would take responsibility for the client. She referred to the Homeless Unit, Social Workers, Probation Officers, the Health Board and the Community Welfare Officer in particular.

*"This is common practice where homeless youths are concerned. All the plans and reports are deficient when it comes down to the real issue of who will take responsibility".*

## ***Discourteous Treatment***

### *Community Welfare Officers*

On the 15/04/03 an eighteen-year-old homeless girl contacted a CIC with a complaint pertaining to a local Community Welfare Officer. The young woman, who had been staying with a friend up to that point, approached the CWO to ascertain whether or not she would be entitled to the Rent Supplement. The information provider stated that the Community Welfare Officer had treated the young woman "*with contempt*". The young woman alleged that the CWO

suggested “she would have to become pregnant before she could be considered for the Rent Supplement”.

On the 12/05/03 a client lodged a complaint regarding the behaviour of the Community Welfare Officers handling his case. The man had worked in the United Kingdom for twenty years and returned to Ireland and signed on for Unemployment Assistance. The man was living in a hostel at the time and could not afford to access any other accommodation. When the client approached the Community Welfare Officer for an interim payment he alleged he was practically interrogated and insulted by the officer. The gentleman was asked to produce documentation of proof of income (Bank Account, etc.). The CWO wished to know why the man had returned to Ireland and why he did not “*stay where he was*”. In addition to this the CWO made clear to the information officer advocating on the clients behalf that she “*resented the CIC interference*” and believed it to be “*entirely unnecessary*”.

A second incident involved a young man, originally from England, who had worked for 3 years in Wexford. After his employment ceased the man had claimed Unemployment Benefit. While waiting for his claim to be processed he had received a Supplementary Welfare Allowance. Having returned to England for a short period he came back to Ireland and sought work in Dublin.

On the 8 May 2003 while still seeking employment, he approached the CWO in the new area to once again request an interim payment while assessment was carried out for a Social Welfare payment. The CWO in this area refused the man this payment.

However the client’s objection was not to the inconsistency that exists between the Health Boards but to the manner in which he was refused the payment. The man claimed he was told to ‘*go back to your own country and get a job there*’. The information provider involved in the case believed that such a remark extends beyond the boundaries of discourtesy and could be construed as a racist slur. “*Public servants need to know that this is absolutely unacceptable*”.

### *Incorrect Calculation of Benefit Entitlement*

A similarly distressing situation was documented at another CIC on the 01/06/03. A recipient of Unemployment Assistance called the CIC to ask if an information provider would double check the accuracy of deductions made by DSFA in respect of part-time employment.

Having made the calculations, the information provider realised the amount deducted was in fact incorrect and had been so for at least a year previous. The client's suspicions were justified. The deductions had not taken account of a disregard for an individual who did not claim for dependent children.

The CIC worker supplied the client with a copy of the calculations and advised her to check this with her DSFA local office. The woman returned to the same CIC office the following day in, what the information provider documented as "*a very agitated state*". The woman had gone to her local office and alleged that a staff member had dealt with her complaint while she was standing at the top of a large queue. She reported that a succession of officers, three in all, had argued with her for 20 minutes regarding the accuracy of the new calculations. The woman felt that the officers conducted this argument in a very aggressive and unsympathetic manner. The client's distress was compounded by the fact that her personal and confidential information was discussed loudly in the middle of a public office, which was very busy at the time, She left without making an official complaint simply because she felt too drained and embarrassed to do so.

The woman had returned to the Citizens Information Centre to ask if it was usual to be subjected to such treatment. The information provider informed her that it was completely contrary to DSFA's mission statement and code of practice and advised her to make an official complaint to the office manager.

## ***Discretionary Power of the CWO***

### ***Interim payments***

On completing a Job Initiative, a man applied for Unemployment Benefit. The client waited for two weeks without word from the local Social Welfare office. At this time he decided to telephone the office as he was without any source of income. He was told that processing his claim would take at least another 5 weeks due to a backlog.

When the gentleman contacted his local Community Welfare Officer he was informed that he would not be eligible to receive an interim payment, as he had no dependants. Neither would the CWO provide a Rent Supplement prior to the client's Unemployment Benefit claim being settled.

The information provider involved stated that the CWO's position amounts to "*discrimination on the grounds of marital status*" and that "*it is unreasonable for the CWO to insist that she does not pay single men*".

Caught in this dilemma the client had no means to pay rent or support himself. The information provider documenting the case also raised a valid question in relation to the local offices' UB application backlog. "*Since Social Welfare uses a computerised system why should it take seven plus weeks to process a benefit claim which does not require a means test?*" (26/06/03).

### ***Supplementary Welfare Allowance***

A woman in receipt of Supplementary Welfare Allowance had her bag stolen. The SWA cheque she had received that morning was in her wallet. The woman went back to the Health clinic the following Friday but the CWO was not on duty so the client waited until the subsequent Tuesday. Meanwhile she reported the theft to the Gardai who filled out the relevant forms. When the Community Welfare Officer was finally reached she wished to know why the client had not cashed the cheque sooner. Since the woman had only received the cheque the morning of the theft, the CWO was intimating that the woman should have cashed it the moment she obtained it. The woman

explained that she had hoped to use the cheque to pay some bills and a Child Benefit payment she had received provided the woman with sufficient cash for the time being. The client's protestations fell on deaf ears as the CWO refused to issue another cheque. The information provider dealing with the woman's case commented "*she needed the payment in order to make ends meet*". The CIC worker also suggested the CWO should have attempted to investigate the matter further to ascertain whether or not the cheque had been cashed or whether it would be possible to cancel it (18/06/03).

## ***Health***

### ***Doctors not complying with legislation***

A client of a CIC with a Medical Card and collecting Disability Allowance of €124.80 a week reported being charged €20.00 for a medical certificate needed for work purposes. The Health Board's stance remains that a doctor should not charge a medical card patient for a medical certificate. However, the information provider who documented this case insisted that it was common practice amongst doctors.

### **Carer's Allowance**

Because it is an end of year payment applicants for the Respite Care Grant will only receive approval for a grant payment up to and including June 5 of each year. If an individual were to apply a day later, on June 6, their application would not be considered until the following year. The information provider documented a case encountered whereby a client missed out on a Respite Care Grant of €1,470 simply because she sought information on applying for the Carer's Allowance on June 9. The woman was caring for two individuals and the information provider was confident that the client would have received a Respite Care Grant had she applied four days earlier (12/06/03).

## ***Employment***

### ***Inconsistencies***

A CIC worker returning a social policy record in relation to employment highlighted a major inconsistency in the definitions of what constitutes part-time and full time workers.

The information provider outlined a number of cases to illustrate the practical difficulties applicants and recipients of Social Welfare payments or participants in Employment schemes encounter as a direct result of this lack of clarity. When an individual applies for Supplementary Welfare Allowance full-time work is described as a 30-hour week or more. However one of the qualifying conditions for Family Income Supplement stipulates that the recipient must be in full-time employment, which is described as a minimum of 19 hours per week. To qualify for Back to Work Allowance the job undertaken must comprise of a minimum of 20 hours work per week while the Revenue Job Assist program requires a minimum of 30 hours work per week

The CIC worker pointed out that the Revenue Job Assist is an alternative to the Back to Work Allowance, aimed at assisting the long term unemployed back into the workforce. Yet there is no consistency between the two schemes in the hours of work required in order to qualify.

A social policy record received on the 23/04/03 made further reference to inconsistencies governing Community Employment, Social Economy and Back to Work Schemes and the Revenue Job Assist program. Time spent in prison counts toward the qualifying period for each of the above mentioned schemes except Revenue Job Assist. While this is a comparable scheme for the long-term unemployed, time spent in prison does not count towards the qualifying period.

### ***Employment and Students***

Numerous complaints were made to CIC staff and volunteers around the country following the cessation of the Student Summer Job Scheme. One particular CIC highlighted the dissatisfaction of a parent whose daughter could

not secure summer employment but was also ineligible for Unemployment Assistance.

The information provider suggested that many students and services were “*suffering the loss of the Scheme*”. The CIC also raised the possibility of placing pressure on the Minister of Social and Family Affairs to reinstate the Scheme or at least offer a viable alternative to the scheme by, for example, extending entitlement to Unemployment Assistance to include students who would otherwise have qualified for the scheme (03/06/03). It was stated: “*Abolishing the Student Summer Job Scheme has removed an important source of income from students, particularly those from poorer backgrounds*”.

### ***Disability Benefit and Rule 5***

A CIC documented a case involving a 35-year-old woman diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and Crohns Disease who received two exemptions to take up employment under Rule 5 of the Disability Benefit guidelines. The client was denied any further exemptions. The woman’s illness was progressive and her doctor advised her not to return to work on a full-time basis but suggested that part-time work would be rehabilitative. The information provider argued “*exceptions should be made for people with progressive illnesses to allow them to work part-time*”.

## ***Refugees***

### ***One Parent Family Payment and Refugees***

A CIC information provider noted a considerable increase over a period of months, in the number of queries made by “*mainly African women*” who were experiencing difficulties with the application process for OFP. All of the women who came forward to the CIC were living alone with dependent children and in receipt of Supplementary Welfare Allowance. Their husbands who had returned to their countries of origin had deserted each of these women and were no longer resident in Ireland.

In some of the cases the women were estranged from their husbands before arriving in this country and they could not locate them in order to seek maintenance. The information provider noted that Social Welfare were unwilling to accept a statement from the women as sufficient evidence of desertion and were refusing to process claims.

## **Bank Accounts**

### *Proof of Identity*

A CIC query on the 28/05/03 highlighted the need for a review of bank rules relating to acceptable proof of identification. An Italian citizen who recently took up employment in Ireland was advised by his employer to open a bank account to enable his salary be paid directly into this account. The bank he contacted insisted on proof of residency in the form of a utilities bill. The client was unable to provide this as he had only recently arrived in the country and also because as a tenant renting a single room the utility bills were not in his name. The bank refused to accept any other proof of residency.

The information provider criticised the bank's inflexibility saying, "*This policy prohibits most non-nationals from opening a bank account, at least in the short term. Surely a passport and a letter from the landlord or a copy of the lease should suffice and provide sufficient safeguard against money laundering*".

## **Social Welfare Customer Service Policy**

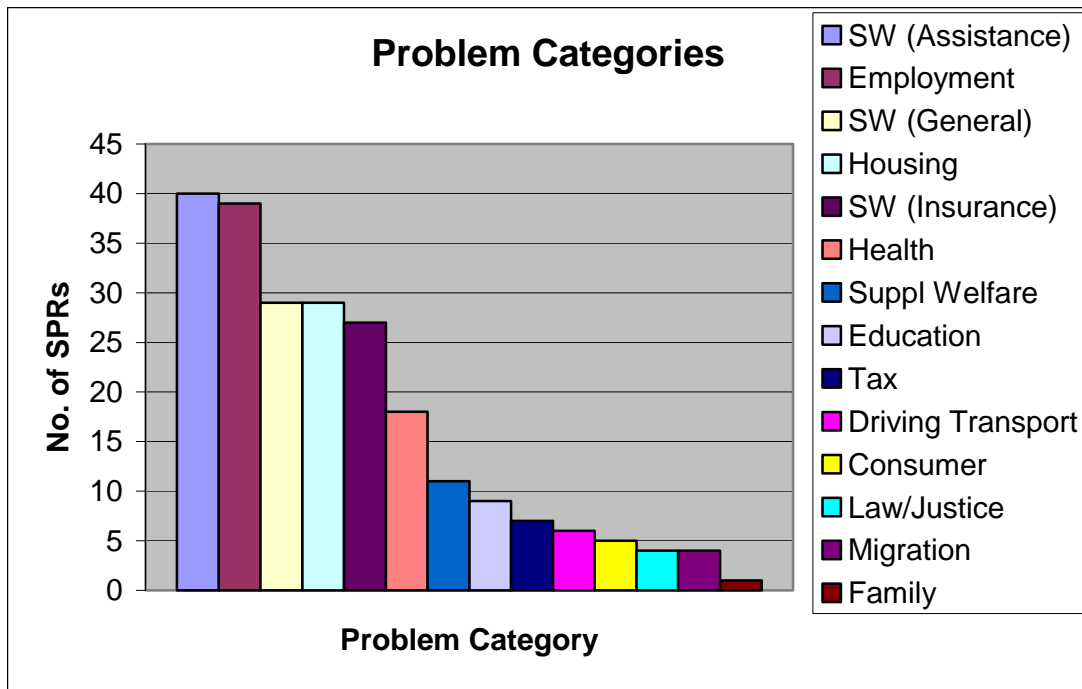
CIC Information Providers are reporting difficulties with engaging the assistance of Social Welfare officials who, with the consent of a client, are contacted regarding a point of information or to query the current status of a claim. One CIC documented "rude and aggressive behaviour" by a Social Welfare official in the Invalidity Pensions section when trying to seek clarification on behalf of a client. Another CIC recorded the reluctance of a local Social Welfare official to engage with an information provider who was attempting to advocate on behalf of a client. Both cases highlight the absence

of a clear policy directive in the Department regarding the intervention of third party information providers.

### *Conclusion*

This report sought to highlight data obtained between April and June 2003 from social policy records submitted to Comhairle from CIC's, which have a relevance to policy and the policy making process. The various issues discussed are those which feature recurrently in the social policy records returned by CICs. Queries and complaints regarding the Rent Supplement and the inadequate provision of information on services and entitlements from various Government Departments dominate data collected in this quarter. Issues surrounding the medical card and the One Parent Family Payment are also pervasive as are employment rights and non-compliance with employment law.

## Appendix 1



\*SPRs: Social Policy Records

Problem Category	N	%
SW (Assistance)	40	17.5
Employment	39	17.0
SW (General)	29	12.7
Housing	29	12.7
SW (Insurance)	27	11.8
Health	18	7.9
Supplementary Welfare	11	4.8
Education	9	3.9
Tax	7	3.1
Driving Transport	6	2.6
Consumer	5	2.2
Law/Justice	4	1.7
Migration	4	1.7
Family	1	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1: Social Policy Records returned by problem category

## **Appendix 2**

CIC	*SPRs Returned
Athlone	8
Ballina	4
Blanchardstown	6
Bray	4
Cahiriveen	1
Citizens Information Call Centre	23
Carlow	22
Carndonagh	4
Castlebar	12
Cavan	5
Cobh	2
Cork	10
Crumlin	2
Dun Laoghaire	2
Dundalk	6
Dungloe	5
Galway	6
Kilkenny	8
Killarney	1
Leitrim	2
Letterkenny	9
Limerick	17
Longford	13
Maynooth	3
Milford	7
Monaghan	2
Newbridge	4
Northside	1
Roscommon	14
Rosmuc	1
Shannon	2
SICCDA	4
Sligo	3
Thurles	1
Tralee	1
Tullamore	1
Waterford	8
Wexford	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>

**Table 2: Social Policy Records returned by CIC/CIS**

**\*SPRs: Social Policy Records**

### Appendix 3

